

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01
TRSE-00 /070 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2063

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DACCA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

USLO PEKING PRIORITY

AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMCONSUL BOMBAY PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL MADRAS PRIORITY

USCINCPAC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 4092

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: MRS GANDHI AND THE CONGRESS IN THE AFTERMATH
OF DEFEAT

REF: NEW DELHI 4004

1. WITHIN HOURS OF SUBMITTING HER RESIGNATION TO ACTING
PRESIDENT JATTI, MRS GANDHI ISSUED A STATEMENT SAYING
THAT SHE AND HER COLLEAGUES ACCEPTED THE PEOPLE'S VER-
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DICT "UNRESERVEDLY AND IN A SPIRIT OF HUMILITY". SHE
REITERATED HER CAMPAIGN STATEMENT THAT WINNING OR LOSING
AN ELECTION IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN STRENGTHENING THE
COUNTRY. HOPING THAT IT WOULD REINFORCE THE SECULAR,
SOCIALIST AND DEMOCRATIC FOUNDATIONS OF INDIA, MRS
GANDHI EXTENDED HER GOOD WISHES TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT
AND SAID THAT SHE AND THE CONGRESS WERE "READY TO GIVE

CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION IN THE COMMON TASKS" THAT FACE THE NATION. EXTENDING HER THANKS TO HER COLLEAGUES AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAD GIVEN HER TRUST, COOPERATION AND AFFECTION, SHE REAFFIRMED HER DEVOTION TO SERVING THE PEOPLE AND STATED THAT SHE INTENDED TO CONTINUE DOING SO.

2. SANJAY GANDHI INDICATED TO NEWSMEN YESTERDAY THAT HE IS QUITTING ACTIVE POLITICS TO DEVOTE HIMSELF TO "QUIET CONSTRUCTIVE WORK." ACCEPTING HIS DEFEAT AS AN "EXPRESSION OF THE PREFERENCE" OF THE PEOPLE OF AMETHI, HE REGRETTED THAT ALLEGATIONS AND CRITICISMS HAD BEEN MADE AGAINST HIM CONCERNING HIS ROLE DURING THE EMERGENCY. HE ADDED: "I AM ALL THE MORE SORRY IF WHAT I DID IN MY PERSONAL CAPACITY HAS RECOILED ON MY MOTHER, WHOSE LIFE HAS BEEN SPENT IN SELFLESS SERVICE."

3. FOLLOWING ITS MARCH 22 MEETING (AT WHICH MRS GANDHI WAS PRESENT), THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD WORK AS A CONSTRUCTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT. IT THANKED MRS GANDHI FOR HER OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP OF THE NATION AND HOPED THAT "SHE WILL CONTINUE TO LEAD US." THE RESOLUTION STATED THAT THE COMMITTEE "ACCEPTS THE VERDICT OF THE PEOPLE EXPRESSED THROUGH THE BALLOT BOX." THE COMMITTEE ALSO DECIDED TO HOLD ORGANIZATIONAL ELECTIONS BY SEPTEMBER 30. ON MARCH 23, Y. B. CHAVAN WAS ELECTED AS LEADER OF THE CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY PARTY.

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4. COMMENT: EXCEPT FOR THE BRIEF PERIOD FOLLOWING THE 1969 CONGRESS SPLIT, THIS WILL BE THE FIRST TIME IN INDIA'S HISTORY THAT THERE WILL BE A RECOGNIZED "LEADER OF THE PRESIDENT'S OPPOSITION" ON THE PATTERN OF THE WESTMINSTER MODEL. THE OPPOSITION LEADER WILL EVEN BE ABLE TO FORM A "SHADOW CABINET." THERE IS ALSO SPECULATION THAT MRS GANDHI MAY BE ASKED TO BECOME PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS PARTY, REPLACING D.K. BAROOAH. WHETHER CONGRESS WILL WANT TO RENEW ITSELF AND FIGHT STATE ELECTIONS UNDER MRS GANDHI'S LEADERSHIP IS A QUESTION WE WILL PURSUE WITH CONGRESS POLITICIANS HERE.

5. ANOTHER ISSUE WHICH MAY COME TO THE FORE IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE NEW JANATA GOVERNMENT DECIDES TO PRESS INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE CONDUCT OF THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY MINISTERS SUCH AS BANSI LAL, OM MEHTA, AND V.C. SHUKLA, AND INTO SANJAY GANDHI'S BUSINESS DEALINGS. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS SAID THAT THERE ARE 46 INVESTIGATIONS HE

WISHES TO SEE INITIATED BY THE NEW PARLIAMENT, AND
MORARJI DESAI HAS TOLD NEWSMEN HE IS PREPARED TO SEE
INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED OF MISCONDUCT. GOERGE
FERNANDES AND HIS FAMILY CONTINUE TO CHARGE THAT THEY
WERE TORTURED AND SUBJECTED TO MISTREATMENT IN JAIL.
IF INVESTIGATIONS INTO THESE ISSUES DO TAKE PLACE, IT
MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR MRS GANDHI'S SKIRTS TO STAY CLEAN
AND THE PERSISTENCE OF POLITICAL STENCH FROM THE EMER-
GENCY MAY GO ON AND ON, AND AS WE OBSERVED EARLIER
(NEW DELHI 2838-- LIMDIS, NOTAL), POISON THE POLITICAL
ATMOSPHERE FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME TO COME.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Sent Date: 23-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: GS
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